

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF CLIMATE-CHANGE AS A HEALTH RISK IN SEOUL, KOREA

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Background and Aims: "Risk Society" is the terminology used in order to define modern society owing to the manners that it organizes in response to the risks and growing environmental concerns. Moreover, environmental and public health policies related to the issues should be considered on the basis of the public risk perception in order to provoke the better public willingness to adapt them. Although the importance of climate-change adaptation has been consensus, there have been relatively little climate-change health risk perception concerns. Therefore, this study aims to identify public risk perceptions on climate-change health impacts while analyzing the influencing factors benefitting the climate-change adaptation policy implementation.

Methods: The survey was conducted in a form of telephone interviews in December 2008 with probability-proportional-to-size-samples of 1,200 adults in Seoul by trained interviewers. Logistic regressions were performed using STATA/SE 10.01 and spatial analysis was assisted with ArcGIS 10.

Results: Most of the respondents believe that global climate-change is serious (93.25%), health risk of the climate-change is hazardous (81.33%), and general climate-change risk awareness dramatically increases health risk recognition (OR: 16.15, 95%CI: 9.20 to 28.37, $p=0.000$). Age square, day time residence area and low income are significant factors influencing the risk perception, but their impacts or confidence intervals are limited. There is no clear spatial clustering of the risk perception, and former exposures to the environmental risk communication regarding ozone, heat wave and fine dust warning have no impact on it. However, the regional differences on the risk perception and exposure levels of the risk communication exist.

Conclusions: In this paper, we attempted to address the climate-change related health risk perception while comparing the regional variation. Although there are limited variables available, the results have some important implications regarding general climate-change risk awareness, socio-economic status to health risk, and regional disparity of risk communication.

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